

INVITED PAPER

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Thinking about Animals: James, Wittgenstein, Hearne

Abstract

In this paper I reconsider James and Wittgenstein, not in the quest for what Wittgenstein might have learned from James, or for an answer to the question whether Wittgenstein was a pragmatist, but in an effort to see what these and other related but quite different thinkers can help us to see about animals, including ourselves. I follow Cora Diamond's lead in discussing a late paper by Vicki Hearne entitled "A Taxonomy of Knowing: Animals Captive, Free-Ranging, and at Liberty" (1995), which draws on Wittgenstein and offers some insights that accord with pragmatist accounts of knowledge.

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"Hear the rats in the wall, see the lizard on the fence, the fungus under foot, the lichen on the log. What do I know sympathetically, morally, of either of these worlds of life? ... I am ashamed to see what a shallow village tale our so-called History is. How many times must we say Rome, and Paris, and Constantinople! What does Rome know of rat and lizard? What are Olympiads and Consulates to these neighbouring systems of being?"

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "History" (1841)
(Emerson 1983: 256)

Introduction

I once wrote a book about Wittgenstein and William James in which I argued for the following claims:

1. Wittgenstein was anxious about his closeness to pragmatism, both in his later writings about language and in his vision of

knowledge in *On Certainty*. There are reasons for this anxiety, and also reasons for Wittgenstein's antipathy to pragmatism.

2. Wittgenstein respected and loved William James, an originator of pragmatism. But this was based on his reading not of the book *Pragmatism* but on his encounter with *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1912 and, after 1930, with *The Principles of Psychology*. In my book I consider the influence of *Varieties* on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, and of the *Principles of Psychology* on *Philosophical Investigations*, where James is criticized but also put to work.

3. One source for Wittgenstein's knowledge of pragmatism is the "Philosophy" chapter of *Varieties*, where James discusses Peirce's pragmatic criterion of significance. Wittgenstein likely knew the harsh criticisms of James's pragmatism put forward by Russell and Moore, and he knew something about Peirce from his colleague Frank Ramsey.

4. James was not only a pragmatist, and I laid stress on non-pragmatic themes in *The Principles of Psychology* that resonate with Wittgenstein's later work: for example, James's emphasis on description rather than explanation or theorizing; his acceptance of messiness, varieties, pluralism; and his discovery of what Wittgenstein calls the "absence of the will act."

5. Although both philosophers discern a level of trust or acceptance in language, thought, and knowledge, James thinks that language, like science, is based on a series of discoveries by "prehistoric geniuses"; whereas for Wittgenstein, reasons eventually give out. On the other hand, Wittgenstein has a much more sophisticated and prominent notion of logic or grammar than does James, who is firmly in the British empirical tradition, especially as represented by John Stuart Mill (Goodman 2002).

Since then, Cora Diamond has got me thinking about animals, and I want to take this opportunity to consider James and Wittgenstein again, not in the quest for what Wittgenstein might have learned from William James, or to consider the degree to which Wittgenstein was a pragmatist, but in an effort to see what these and other related but quite different thinkers can help *us* to see about animals, including ourselves.

1. James

William James was an undergraduate at the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard and graduated from the medical school there in 1869, although he never practiced medicine. He began teaching at the medical school in 1873 and eventually became a professor of psychology and then a professor of philosophy. He seems always to have been going beyond himself.

Some of James's earliest writing concerns the uses of animals in science. In an unsigned article in the *Nation* from 1875, the 30-year old scientist defends the practice of vivisection, i.e. cutting or dissecting living animals. The suffering of a dog, rabbit, or frog, he argues, is outweighed by the benefits for human knowledge and the possible easing of human suffering it may bring about. Could the dog only see the world "beyond the ken of his poor, benighted brain", James writes complacently, "his sufferings are having their effect – truth, and perhaps future human ease are being bought by them" (1987a: 11). James concedes that vivisection "admits of cruelty", and he calls for the end of bloody demonstrations on animals in medical schools. He also registers the hypocrisy of his fellow New Englanders who disrupt scientific work with their associations for the prevention of cruelty to animals, but who belong to "a community which boils millions of lobsters alive every year to add a charm to its suppers" (13).

Dogs, frogs, birds, monkeys, and other animals appear in James's first masterwork, *The Principles of Psychology*, published fifteen years later in 1890. James professes to follow the new scientific method of introspection, but he opens the book with several chapters on anatomy and physiology (the subjects he first taught at the Harvard Medical School) and it is in the second of these, entitled "The Functions of the Brain", that many of James's discussions of animals occur. James cites works by the Scottish psychologist David Ferrier, whose picture of the dog's brain he reproduces, by Hermann Munk and Friedrich Goltz in Germany, and by the Italian Luigi Luciani in demonstrating the links between behavior and specific lesions in the brain (what he calls "localization of brain function"). He is equally interested in the

dog's ability to compensate for such injuries, as the following characteristically lively and observant passage makes clear:

When the cortical spot which is found to produce a movement of the fore-leg, in a dog, is excised ... the leg in question becomes peculiarly affected. At first it seems paralyzed. Soon, however, it is used with the other legs, but badly. The animal does not bear his weight on it, allows it to rest on its dorsal surface, stands with it crossing the other leg, does not remove it if it hangs over the edge of a table, can no longer 'give the paw' at word of command if able to do so before the operation, does not use it for scratching the ground, or holding a bone as formerly ... All these symptoms gradually decrease, so that even with a very severe brain-lesion the dog may be outwardly indistinguishable from a well dog after eight or ten weeks. Still, a slight chloroformization will reproduce the disturbances, even then. (James 1981: 43-4)

James is not concerned with the dog's inner life or with cruelty to animals. His book is about human psychology, and he considers the animals because of the ways in which they are like us – in the case at hand because specific parts of their brains control specific aspects of their behavior. James does allude in passing to our human interaction with dogs when he writes that a human being can “command” a dog to “give its paw”. We shall return to this.

Animals make another appearance in the *Principles*, this time in an epistemological context at the end of James's great chapter on “The Stream of Thought”. The point of James's discussion is that all creatures register a selection from the primary chaos of impressions, each according to its kind. “Other sculptors”, he writes in one of his most fertile metaphors, “other statues from the same stone! Other minds, other worlds from the same monotonous and inexpressive chaos! My world is but one in a million alike embedded, alike real to those who may abstract them. How different must be the worlds in the consciousness of ant, cuttlefish, or crab!” (James 1981: 277). The worlds of human beings and cuttlefish agree in some respects, James holds, but each individual has its own take on the world. “Even the trodden worm”, he writes, “contrasts his own suffering self with the whole remaining universe, though he have no clear conception of himself or of what the universe may be. He is for me a mere part of the world; for him

it is I who am the mere part” (278). Whereas in the early physiological chapters of his *Psychology* James is concerned with the ways the brain controls the behavior of animals, here he is interested in animals as conscious beings different from ourselves, but alike both in sculpting the world from a primary chaos, and in certain categories of that sculpting.

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Three years after he published the *Principles of Psychology*, James published an anonymous letter in a French newspaper that shows a different attitude towards animals than that of the thirty-one-year old medical doctor who defended vivisection. He writes (in French, my translations here) of walking daily past a large masonry box in which a local farmer keeps his pigs. It is a sight, he writes, the memory of which obsesses him, “as the poor animals are buried alive in a kind of tomb”. The box has one opening at the top to let in air; another with a lid that is opened to throw in food. “When one imagines what the air and darkness in this tomb must be”, James writes, “and when one thinks that its inhabitants are buried *all their lives*, except for the moment when they are taken out to have their throats cut, one must avow that there is cruelty here, if not active, at least passive and unreflective by men governed by ignorance, routine, the refusal to think”. “What a destiny”, he continues, “for a living being for whom the air and the light are the source of well being as much as they are for us! Each time that I take a walk again in the magnificent weather we have been having, I see this species of grave where the poor beasts are entombed, and it darkens all my pleasure” (James 1987a: 141). James sees the pigs as fellow creatures who deserve their time on earth, in the light and air. He expresses no qualms, however, about *eating* the pigs.

Animals show up in “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life”, first published in 1891 and included in *The Will to Believe and other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1896) (the period during which James wrote his plea for the French pigs). Morality doesn’t exist, he maintains, without sentient creatures: there would be no sense in saying that one state of a world “containing only physical and chemical facts ... is better than another” (James 1992: 599). James

tends to think of morality in terms of *demands*, which need not be those of human beings:

Take any demand, however slight, which any creature, however weak may make. Ought it not, for its own sole sake, to be satisfied? If not, prove why not. The only possible kind of proof you could adduce would be the exhibition of another creature who should make a demand that ran the other way. (James 1992: 603)

When he read this lecture at Harvard, a student reported, James remarked: “Gentlemen, as long as one poor cockroach feels the pangs of unrequited love, this world is not a moral world” (Richardson 2006: 309).

Throughout the 1890s James gave lectures to teachers and students that were published at the end of the decade as *Talks to Teachers and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals*. The penultimate essay in the volume, “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” is a major statement in moral philosophy that concerns our abilities and inabilities to recognize the intensity, meaning, joy or pain of others. James offers an example from his own experience in the form of his initial inability to see the beauty of a landscape of stumps cut down by a North Carolina farmer. To James it seemed only a scene of devastation but to the farmer it expressed years of his labor and devotion.

James also considers Robert Lewis Stevenson’s story “The Lantern Bearers”. Stephenson describes the engrossing joy of young boys who meet secretly “on the links” at night, “spat upon by flurries of rain, and drearily surrounded”, but nevertheless “in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern” that they conceal under their coats. To “miss the joy” of these events, Stevenson writes, is “to miss all” (James 1992: 846). In commenting, James writes that we mostly *do* miss “the vast world of inner life beyond us,” although poets, philosophers and lovers may soften or break through the hardness of our patterns of seeing (847).

Early in his “Blindness” essay, James makes clear that his remarks apply as much to our relations to non-human animals as they do to relations among human beings. The “blindness in human beings of which this discourse will treat,” he writes, “is the

blindness with which we are all are afflicted in regard to the feelings of creatures and people different from ourselves” (841). The main example of such “creatures” is dogs, the subject of the long fourth paragraph of the essay. James writes:

Take our dogs and ourselves, connected as we are by a tie more intimate than most ties in this world; and yet, outside of that tie of friendly fondness, how insensible, each of us, to all that makes life significant for the other! – we to the rapture of bones under hedges, or smells of trees and lamp-posts, they to the delights of literature and art. As you sit reading the most moving romance you ever fell upon, what sort of a judge is your fox-terrier of your behavior? With all his good will toward you, the nature of your conduct is absolutely excluded from his comprehension. To sit there like a senseless statue, when you might be taking him to walk and throwing sticks for him to catch! What queer disease is this that comes over you every day, of holding things and staring at them like that for hours together, paralyzed of motion and vacant of all conscious life? (James 1992: 841)

James thinks we are mostly blind to the dogs, but not entirely so. He is able to imagine to a certain degree – somewhat like Thomas Nagel in “What is it Like to be a Bat?” – what it is like to be a dog. For example, smells are important and walks are too. So is the game of throwing sticks, something that he and the dog share. James speaks of a “friendly fondness” between human beings and dogs, but also of “a tie more intimate than most ties in this world.” Whatever we are to make of this claim, it is clear that James is interested in the dogs as conscious beings: in their blindness to us as well as ours to them, and in the validity of their ways of organizing the world. He imagines them in their state of non-understanding, failing to comprehend how we can stare at that not particularly smelly object that we call a book for hours on end. We are like the bearers of the lanterns in Stevenson’s story, but we cannot show our lanterns to the dogs. An “innavigable sea”, to use Emerson’s expression, “washes with silent waves between us” and them (Emerson: 473). Yet the dogs have their own lanterns, which James can only begin to imagine with his little dramatization of the dog’s world of bones and captivating smells.

Our *relation* to dogs comes up again in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) in a footnote to James’s chapter on “Saintliness”.

James is discussing the change in one's attitude towards humanity that sainthood may bring, an effacement of the "usual human barriers" in an extraordinary, pervasive, love. He cites the story of the Polish patriot and mystic, Towianski, who allowed a large dog to jump on him, covering him with mud. Towianski explained: "This dog, whom I am now meeting for the first time, has shown a great fellow-feeling for me, and a great joy in my recognition and acceptance of his greetings. Were I to drive him off, I would wound his feeling and do him a moral injury" (James 1987b: 258n.). This passage is particularly interesting for the ideas of "greetings" and "recognition" it contains – in this case the dog's greetings and Towianski's acceptance of them. What is depicted here is not just the body, behavior, or consciousness of the dog, but a deep relation between two animals, human and canine.

The final Jamesean passage about animals that I wish to consider appears in a somewhat surprising place: the last chapter of *Pragmatism*, entitled "Pragmatism and Religion". What James means by pragmatism can seem quite different depending on where you look. The last chapter of his book is actually continuous with its first chapter, where James announces that pragmatism "can remain religious like the rationalisms, but at the same time, like the empiricisms, it can preserve the richest intimacy with facts" (1975: 23). James's last chapter takes up this theme and reveals pragmatism's continuity with *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in seeking to secure a place for religion in a plausible account of the natural world. It is here that dogs (and now cats too) come in, as examples of forms of consciousness that partially overlap with our own. James writes:

I firmly disbelieve, myself, that our human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in much the same relation to the whole of the universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. They inhabit our drawing rooms and libraries. They take part in scenes of whose significance they have no inkling. They are merely tangent to curves of history the beginnings and ends and forms of which pass wholly beyond their ken. But, just as many of the dog's and cat's ideals coincide with our ideals, and the dogs and cats have daily living proof of the fact, so we may well believe, on the proofs that religious

experience affords, that higher powers exist and are at work to save the world on ideal lines similar to our own (James 1975: 143-4).

James's main point is not about dog's consciousness, but about possible forms of consciousness that stand to our own somewhat as ours stands to the dog's. The universe seems to contain grades and varieties of consciousness and interest: among human beings, among the animals at large, in domains, James thinks, that we only briefly encounter in religious experience. Note that although James emphasizes our foreignness to the dogs, he also maintains that they have ideals that "coincide" with our own. As examples, I think of eating, running, playing, keeping warm. These ideals for dogs (and cats) are also ideals for us, part of the human form of life, part of the dog's and cat's form of life. The philosopher Moritz Schlick once maintained that play is the meaning of life (Schlick 1979: 114-15). If that is true, then it is a meaning that we share with many animals.

2. Wittgenstein

Let us now turn to a reader of James's *Principles of Psychology* and *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Whereas animals are absent from the *Tractatus* (though the propositions of natural science would presumably refer to them), the *Investigations* recognizes the existence of mice, dogs, cows, and a wriggling fly. The book also places the human beings among the animals, even as it considers how they differ from the others. Early in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes:

It is sometimes said: animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity. And this means: "they do not think, and that is why they do not talk." But – they simply do not talk. Or to put it better: they do not use language – if we except the most primitive forms of language. – Giving orders, asking questions, telling stories, having a chat, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing (PI 25).

Wittgenstein says that we are to describe rather than explain in philosophy, and that "if someone were to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them" (PI 128). We might want to

challenge Wittgenstein here, to debate his report about animals' non-use of language in view of what we know about dolphins, bonobos, and other animals, and perhaps he might have more to say were he writing the *Investigations* early in the present century rather than early in the last one. But Wittgenstein does allow for “primitive forms of language” among the animals. He is not drawing a sharp line but is noticing differences. When he says that animals “do not use language”, he means that they do not give orders, ask questions, pray, or tell jokes: in short that most of the uses of language he lists in paragraph 23 of the *Investigations* are not things the animals do. On the other hand, walking, drinking, eating, playing, are a “part of our natural history” that we *share* with the other animals.

It will be helpful now to recall the distinction Stanley Cavell draws between two dimensions of what Wittgenstein calls the human form of life (Cavell 1989: 41-2). The social dimension includes promising, giving orders, inaugurations, and the telling of stories, but, Cavell argues:

the typical emphasis on the social eclipses the twin preoccupation of the *Investigations*, call this the natural, in the form of “natural reactions” (185), ... or that of “the common behavior of mankind” (206). The partial eclipse of the natural makes the teaching of the *Investigations* much too, let me say, conventionalist.... (Cavell 1989: 41)

The conventionalist interpretation of the *Investigations* focuses on rules and agreements, whereas the natural or biological interpretation brings the human body into prominence. As Cavell puts it:

The biological or vertical sense of form of life recalls differences between the human and so-called “lower” or “higher” forms of life, between, say, poking at your food, perhaps with a fork, and pawing at it, or pecking at it. Here the romance of the hand and its appposable thumb comes into play, and of the upright posture and of the eyes set for heaven; but also the specific strength and scale of the human body and of the human senses and of the human voice. (Cavell 1989: 41-2)

If Wittgenstein offers us a “vision of language”, as Cavell maintains in *The Claim of Reason*, it is a vision of the practices of a particular animal – with hands, a face, an “upright posture”, and

with a vast potential for what he calls *grammar*. As we shall see in part 3, some of that grammar involves animals.

So what does Wittgenstein say about the other biological forms? As with James, dogs are a major example, appearing at five points in the *Investigations* – as often as St. Augustine, more often than Socrates, Frege, or James. The first of these references to dogs is at PI 250, where Wittgenstein writes:

Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too honest? Could one teach a dog to simulate pain? Perhaps it is possible to teach him to howl on particular occasions as if he were in pain, even when he is not. But the surroundings which are necessary for this behavior to be real simulation are missing.

Dogs can be sneaky or deceptive, and that there are stories of dogs pretending to be injured and doing other clever things. So perhaps a dog can simulate pain. Would the dog then be dishonest? Wittgenstein is making a revealing little joke here, based on the incongruity of saying that dogs either are or are not honest. They do not have a form of life in which honesty is a major component in the way that for example, hiding bones and smelling lampposts are.

Wittgenstein maintains that “the surroundings which are necessary for this behavior to be real simulations are missing”. What are these surroundings? Language, including the activities of questioning, asserting, reporting, rebuking – in short, the human form of life. If we consider how children learn to be honest and dishonest, we see the many potential achievements of the child that are not open to the dog, including assertion and questioning. “A child has much to learn before it can pretend”, Wittgenstein writes, and he then adds: “A dog can't be a hypocrite, but neither can it be sincere” (PPF 363). A dog cannot learn these things. The modal expressions “can” and “can't” in Wittgenstein's statement manifest the necessity of the grammatical. “A dog can't be a hypocrite” is a grammatical remark, in Wittgenstein's sense.

The passages we have just discussed concern things that dogs cannot do or be, but in another passage, *Investigations* 650, Wittgenstein reports our attribution of one kind of mental state to dogs, while denying that we can attribute another. He writes: “We

say a dog is afraid his master will beat him; but not: he is afraid his master will beat him tomorrow. Why not?” Again Wittgenstein reports what we say in ordinary language, where it is perfectly natural to say that the dog is afraid his master will beat him. Notice that the fear that we attribute to dogs is not based on any *linguistic* competence the dogs have. If they had such competence they might be able to express their fear about what will happen tomorrow, but nothing in our interactions with them suggests that they harbor such fears. Wittgenstein is tracing not only the grammar of the human form of life, but that of the dog’s form of life – or, to anticipate my discussion of Vicki Hearne in section 3, the grammar of our form of life with the dog.

Wittgenstein asks a question. Why don’t we say the dog is afraid his master will beat him tomorrow, although we might say the dog is afraid his master will beat him. Shall we simply say that “this is what we do” and not to try to explain anything? I would prefer to do what Wittgenstein often does, which is to remind us how our concepts fit certain facts of nature, like the fact that infants cry, or the fact that objects don’t disappear and reappear for no reason. Our concepts follow or express our interests, Wittgenstein says, but they must fit the world we live in. We don’t say that the dog is afraid his master will beat him tomorrow because we don’t find that dogs plan for the future as we do. Dogs don’t tell stories, they don’t chat, they don’t sing (though I once had a dog who liked to moan with me). They don’t write operas or string quartets. In answer to Wittgenstein’s question “why not”? I would say that we’ve never found dogs behaving in a way that invites us to apply our concept of fearing the future to them. If we find a use for such language, then we’ll go ahead and employ it, as we do when we ascribe the fear of an imminent beating to a dog. We don’t ascribe such fears to a block of stone; or, in the animal world, to a mouse, a fly, or a lion – to name three other animals who inhabit the pages of the *Investigations*.

Let us now turn to an animal for which deception and sincerity seem completely out of the question, the wriggling fly that appears in PI 284:

Look at a stone and imagine it having sensations. – One says to oneself: How could one so much as get the idea of ascribing a *sensation* to a *thing*? One might as well ascribe it to a number! – And now look at a wriggling fly and at once these difficulties vanish and pain seems able to get a *foothold* here, where before everything was, so to speak, too *smooth* for it.

The contrast between *smooth* and *wriggling* is central to this observation. It is not just the body of the fly that enables pain to get a foothold, but its movements. Wittgenstein does not state a thesis here, he does not claim, for example, that the fly is or can be in pain. But he is pointing to something the fly shares with other animals including ourselves, but not with the block of stone. We could call this something *behavior*, and certainly the threat or possibility of a simple-minded behaviorism haunts the *Investigations*. I would rather think of it along the lines of what Cora Diamond calls “our own sense of what it is to be a living animal”, something vulnerable, that clings to life (Diamond 2008: 53). The wriggling fly, as I think of it, is intensely full of itself, but its existence can be easily brought to an end by a boy with a fly swatter, an amusement to which I dedicated myself on some otherwise boring summer afternoons.

“Wriggling” is a funny word to use to describe a fly, actually. It applies more clearly to a worm or snake, which moves forward by twisting from side to side. Perhaps this fly is injured, wriggling to escape danger, but still intensely, wholly, clinging to life. Whether my responses to the image of the wriggling fly strike a chord with you or not, they are evidence for the descriptive claim that Wittgenstein makes in the second paragraph of PI 284: “Our attitude to what is alive and to what is dead is not the same. All our reactions are different”.

These *reactions* are found in our relations to other human beings as well as to the animals. As Wittgenstein reports: “If I see someone writhing in pain with evident cause, I do not think: all the same, his feelings are hidden from me” (PPF 324). Trying to rid oneself of such reactions or to impose such skeptical thoughts, as when we try to imagine that all the people we see around us are automata, produces an “uncanny” feeling (PI 420). These feelings and reactions, as much as certain facts of nature, are woven into

our proceedings with language, and are thus appropriate subjects for someone tracing the grammar of concepts like pain, the body, and the living.

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Let's turn now to a sequence in the *Investigations* that begins with human beings and ends with a lion. Again, Wittgenstein traces the grammar or physiognomy of the human, following his own method of describing what we say in our ordinary language, but also reminding us of the context in which we say these things:

We also say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them. (PPF 325)

"I cannot know what is going on in him" is above all a *picture*. It is the convincing expression of a conviction. It does not give the reasons for the conviction. *They* are not readily accessible. (PPF 326)

If a lion could talk, we could not understand him. (PPF 327)

Paragraph 325 opens with a representative case of ordinary language philosophy, with Wittgenstein's statement that "We say of some people that they are transparent to us". In the second sentence of the paragraph he passes from a remark about language to one directly about our knowledge of others, or lack of it: "one human being may be a complete enigma to another". It is important, he says, to remember the enigmatic possibilities of people when we are considering their occasional transparency. Notice the modality: one human being *may* be, but need not be, an enigma; and *some* people but not all are transparent to us.

Wittgenstein provides an example of the way a whole culture of people may be enigmas to us. We cannot, as he says, "find our feet with them". This invites us to think about what sometimes happens also, that we *do* find our feet with them, perhaps after living with them for a while. When we learn our way even a little in a foreign

country it's not by peering into other people's souls or inner stream of thought ("what they are saying to themselves") but by understanding what to expect and how to respond in certain situations, how to show respect and what is disrespectful, what is normal and what is funny, and so on. In PPF 326 Wittgenstein counters this "peering into" picture of what it is to know others, a picture to which William James was often attracted.

Now to the lion. Lions can't talk, although they can roar. When Wittgenstein begins his sentence with the phrase: "if a lion could talk ..." this presupposes that they can't. I take "lions cannot talk" to be a grammatical remark. Why is it placed in the stream of sentences about the transparency or enigmatic nature of people and cultures? I think the lion is a kind of limiting case, another form of life in the vertical or biological sense. The lion is far more foreign than another culture or person, something like Nagel's bat, James's cuttle-fish, Emerson's "neighboring system of being". The lion, as Nagel says of the bat, is "a fundamentally *alien* form of life" (Nagel 1974: 438). But it is nevertheless entirely real.

The final remark from the *Investigations* to which I call attention is this: "the human body is the best picture of the human soul". Wittgenstein then continues: "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul" (PPF 4). I would like to extend all this to the other animals, and say that our attitudes towards them are attitudes towards souls. Towards animal souls, to be sure, and we are still working out what this means epistemologically and ethically. These attitudes include or make room for our denials or avoidances of these souls, and they are keyed to their bodies and motions, as with James's dogs and Wittgenstein's wriggling fly.

If the human body is the best picture of the human soul then I also want to say that the dog's body is the best picture of the dog soul, the dolphin's body the best picture of the dolphin soul, and so on for lions, cats, horses, and flies. The cat's voluptuous swishing tail, the horse's upright ears and eager trot, the dog's eyes seeking yours, are pictures or representations of their souls.

3. Hearne

When we turn to Vicki Hearne we turn especially to dogs and horses, and to things that we do together: a subject that Wittgenstein does not consider and to which James only alludes. Hearne draws on Wittgenstein's later philosophy, however, in her books *Adam's Task* (1986), *Bandit: Dossier of a Dangerous Dog* (1991) and *Animal Happiness* (1994), and in the later essay on which I focus here: "A Taxonomy of Knowing: Animals Captive, Free-Ranging, and at Liberty". The terms of her title, Hearne explains, "describe not so much conditions in which animals in themselves might be as conditions *we* are in with the animals, social and grammatical conditions and circumstances" (Hearne 1994: 442). We know animals in captivity when we encounter them in zoos or traps or fish tanks, and we observe free ranging birds in city and country, free ranging fish in river, lake, and sea.

Hearne's particular concern is with her third category, animals "at liberty", or as she also says, "off lead". We know animals at liberty only in their relations with human beings, especially though not exclusively in the work they do with us. As Hearne explains: "I take the expression 'at liberty' from circus tradition, where it refers to horses who work without physical restraints – without tack, that is. They, rather, are restrained by the perimeters and terms and grammars of cooperation, by understanding" (443). Such animals are not coerced, though they must be trained. They are like the members of a hockey team who willingly cooperate with each other for a common purpose and with a common understanding. But in the case of the circus horses, the cooperation is between species. It is social and institutional, and so a horizontal form of life; but it also spans two vertical levels, two biological forms.

Another case Hearne considers, that of herding sheep, can be performed neither by the shepherd alone nor by the sheepdog alone. "A condition for such work", she writes,

is that the dog and the human ... be motivated and organized in their work by a social gravity which keeps them turning toward each other and/or mutually turning toward an object of work. ... Herding dogs and search and rescue dogs, as well as hunting dogs, can be working a

mile or more from their handlers without losing track of what I am here calling a grammar. (Hearne 1994: 443, 447)

Hearne invokes Wittgenstein, Cavell, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas to characterize the intimacy of relations between these animals and human beings. Blending Wittgenstein and Buber, she speaks of the “grammar of the ‘I-Thou’ and ... the ‘I-it’”; and of the difference between the knowledge of the scientist and the knowledge of a person who works closely with a horse or dog. She invokes Levinas on *Greeting* and Cavell (from *The Claim of Reason*) on *receptive beholding* in writing: “Beholding or Greeting, is a privileged form of knowledge. It is in Beholding and Greeting, for example, that it is easiest to tell whether or not a dog is being honest” (453).

I don’t know how many of you have been greeted by a dog or a horse lately, but a recent incident came immediately to mind as I read Hearne and Levinas. Last summer, descending a Colorado mountain trail, I found myself too hot to go on comfortably, so I sat down by the side of the trail. I didn’t want to talk to anyone, just to let my body cool down. A few hikers came by, then two women with a medium sized dog. I could somehow tell that the dog was inquisitive enough to check me out so I averted my eyes until the hikers passed, having no desire to make any new friends at that moment, human or canine. I then became aware of a silent presence to my left. It was of course the dog, who said nothing and didn’t touch me, but presented her little brown head for me to pat. It was surprisingly hot. Having greeted me, she took off as quietly as she had appeared. The dog was literally “off lead” and so at liberty in Hearne’s sense; she understood the concept of the walk and so returned to her human family, but she had the freedom to exercise her will and the tact to greet me respectfully. The will, Hearne writes, “finds its freedom in the world – its capacity to know the world as particularity, in meeting the forms of the world with its own forms” (455). The little Colorado dog and I knew how to greet each other, relying on our own forms and experience.

In discussing Levinas on Greeting, Hearne considers another case of knowing an animal. It concerns a horse that you can’t judge in the moment of greeting, but need to work with for a while

before being able to assess its character. “[T]he greatest experts can be wrong”, she writes, “which is why the horse trainer sometimes must get in the saddle in order to find out what is going on with a particular horse and rider”. Both the greeting, and the human being’s work with dog and horse are forms of I-thou interspecies grammar. Although Hearne does not say so, the idea that we know by doing – riding a horse, working with a sheepdog – is of course a major theme in pragmatism, particularly that of John Dewey.

4. Conclusion

I want to conclude by returning to James’s “Blindness” essay. Just after discussing the lantern bearer story, James quotes a passage from Josiah Royce’s *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885) that also bears on and uses the term *blindness*. “Thou has lived with thy neighbor”, Royce writes, “and has known him not, being blind”. But Royce broadens the extension of the neighbor beyond human beings: “Pain is pain, joy is joy, everywhere even as in thee. In all the songs of the forest birds; in all the cries of the wounded and dying, struggling in the captor’s power; in the boundless sea ... amid all the countless hordes of savage men ... everywhere from the lowest to the noblest, the same conscious, burning, willful life is found, endlessly manifold as the forms of the living creatures ...” (James 1992: 847-8).

James uses Royce to call attention not just to the inner life of others but to the cries of the wounded and dying. Such cries have a place in “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life”, where James portrays our moral systems as evolving equilibria of ideals, with “nothing final” about any of them. Each system, James holds, squelches or wounds somebody and forecloses the realization of certain ideals: “The pinch is always here. Pent in under every system of moral rules are innumerable persons whom it weighs upon, and goods which it represses; and these are always rumbling and grumbling in the background, and ready for any issue by which they may get free” (James 1992: 611). He cites slavery and judicial torture as rejected systems, and marriage as a current one that offers many benefits but also represses certain goods.

Our current systems of meat production and consumption offer many benefits but also repress certain goods, or even create more suffering. But as Wittgenstein reminds us, animals mostly don't use language, so it is we human beings who must speak for them, if anyone is going to. Ancient Indian philosophers in the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions spoke for animals, and the nineteenth century American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, who learned much from Hinduism, recommended fishing and hunting, not only for the chance to live in nature but for the chance for a young person to directly confront death, administered by oneself. "The hare in its extremity cries like a child", Thoreau writes in *Walden* (1971: 212). Hunting and fishing, he argues in the chapter entitled "Higher Laws", are stages of education: to be tried, learned from, and left behind. Sitting inside his cabin and facing outwards from his open doorway, Thoreau finds himself

[...] suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those smaller and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager – the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip-poor-will, and many others. (Thoreau 1971: 85)

Hearne gets close to those neighboring systems of being we call horses and dogs by working with them, Thoreau with those we call birds by letting them come near him.

Sometimes philosophy proceeds not by solving or dissolving, but by opening up a philosophical problem, or agitating a deflected concern. I agree with Elizabeth Costello when she says that she doesn't know what she thinks about animals. "I often wonder what thinking is", she says, "what understanding is. Do we really understand the universe better than animals do?" (Coetzee 2003: 90). This seems to me a reasonable, productively skeptical, and realistic note on which to end this survey.

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